BRITISH COLUMBIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OFFICE

PERFORMANCE PLAN

2001-2002
to
2003-2004

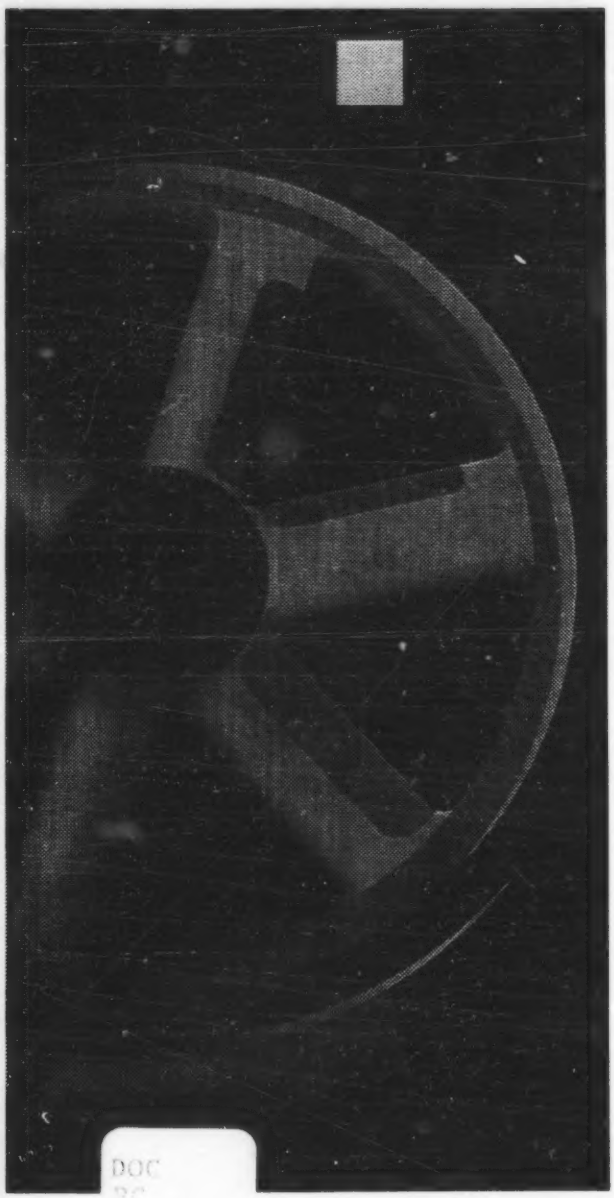

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Table of Contents

1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT 1

1.1 Vision 1
1.2 Mission 1
1.3 Legislated Mandate 2
1.4 Values 3
1.5 Environmental Scan 4

2 GOALS & BUSINESS AREAS 5

2.1 Key Business Areas 5
2.2 Goals 6
2.3 Objectives 6
2.4 Strategies 6

3 PERFORMANCE MEASURES & TARGETS 7

4 CONSISTENCY WITH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 8

4.1 Safeguarding BC's Natural Heritage 8
4.2 A Modern Economy That Works for Everyone . . 8
4.3 Delivering Real Health Care Solutions and Expanding Educational Opportunities 9
4.4 Safer Communities and a Higher Quality of Life 9

5 RESOURCES 10

5.1 Organization 10
5.2 Resources 10

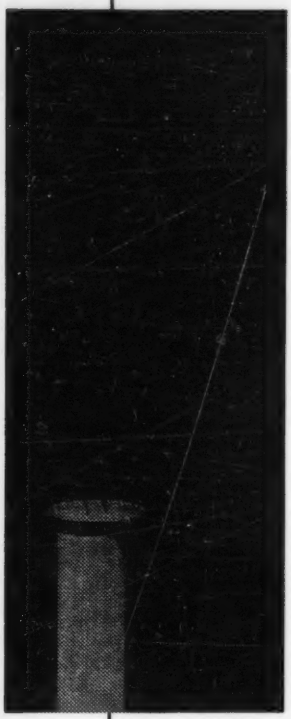
APPENDICES

Appendix A - EAO Logic Model 12
Appendix B - EAO Organization Chart 13
Appendix C - Glossary 14

March 31, 2001

Strategic Content

The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) leads co-ordinated reviews of major projects being proposed for development in BC. The environmental assessment (EA) process identifies any potential significant impact issues and works with proponents, government agencies, the public and First Nations to address them. Issues are evaluated within the context of the government's most current policy framework.



In balancing the broad spectrum of issues and concerns that arise, there are often conflicting expectations among interested parties. The public, interest groups and regulatory agencies often seek more information to review the proposal and more time to grasp the impacts, while proponents are hoping for timely approvals based on the minimum necessary investment in studies. These conflicting pressures are inherent in all EA processes. The EAO leads EA reviews with a high level of professionalism and objectivity to ensure that government continues to receive credible, impartial advice.

The EAO's 2001/02 to 2003/04 Performance Plan was prepared in accordance with the planning and reporting requirements of British Columbia's Budget Transparency and Accountability Act. The following planning elements have been further developed from those presented in Strategic Directions 2003: Strategic Management Framework of the Environmental Assessment Office (April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2003).

1.1 Vision

The Environmental Assessment Office is a leader in the field of environmental assessment, enhancing the lives of British Columbians by supporting informed political decisions on major projects and contributing to long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability.

1.2 Mission

To provide British Columbians with a comprehensive, thorough and timely environmental assessment review process for major projects, leading to balanced advice and recommendations that reflect the government's broader objectives for sustainability and that inform and support ministerial decisions.

1.3 Legislated Mandate

Established in 1995, the (EAO) is a neutral agency that oversees project reviews under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Consistent with the principles of the Act, the mandate of the EAO is to:

- Promote sustainability by protecting the environment and fostering a sound economy and social well-being;
- Provide for the thorough, timely and integrated assessment of the environmental, economic, social, cultural, heritage and health effects of reviewable projects;
- Prevent or mitigate adverse effects throughout the life cycle (i.e. design, construction, operation, modification, closure) of reviewable projects;
- Provide an open, accountable and neutrally administered process for the assessment of reviewable projects and activities; and
- Provide for meaningful participation in assessments under the *Environmental Assessment Act* by the proponents, the public, First Nations, municipalities and regional districts, federal and provincial governments and their agencies, and, where appropriate, British Columbia's neighbouring jurisdictions.

To do this, the EAO delivers an (EA) review process that:

- promotes sustainability and environmental protection while enhancing the economy and social stability of local communities and the province;
- identifies and strives to resolve all key issues raised;
- effectively communicates the goals of the legislation and role of the EAO;
- provides opportunities for meaningful participation by potentially affected government interests (federal, provincial, local government, First Nations and other jurisdictions);
- addresses the government's statutory and common law obligations to First Nations;
- harmonizes the EA requirements of federal and other jurisdictions with provincial requirements;
- provides the public with effective notification, ready access to information, and opportunities for input to EA reviews of proposed projects;
- strives to maintain the confidence of the public, participants, proponents, and decision-makers;

- is managed efficiently within available staffing and resources;
- provides decision-makers with information that is comprehensive, balanced, and timely; and
- results in project approval certificates that withstand a variety of types of legal challenges and tests.

1.4 Values

Neutrality

The EAO is neutral government agency that leads and directs the assessment of the impacts, both positive and negative, of major project proposals in British Columbia.

The EAO develops and implements processes and policies designed to ensure that the Ministers receive impartial, balanced and informed recommendations upon which to base their decisions on projects under review.

The EAO may also be directed to provide both leadership and technical and administrative support for special projects where a neutral agency is required to avoid the perception of bias (e.g. Special Commission SkyTrain Review, Burns Bog Ecosystem Review, and enhanced public consultation for Royal Bay).

Fairness

The EAO leads a fair and open review process for identifying potential adverse effects of major proposals and, where possible, developing appropriate strategies to prevent or mitigate them.

The EAO ensures that First Nations with a potential interest are offered the opportunity to sit on the Project Committee and to participate fully in the review process.

The EAO ensures that the public is provided with information on project reviews and that there is adequate public notification and consultation.

Efficiency

The Environmental Assessment Office EAO continues to improve delivery of an efficient and effective review process.

The EAO continues to work with the federal government to improve review procedures conducted under the Canada-BC Agreement for Environmental Assessment Co-operation.

The EAO strives to meet project review timelines as set out in the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

1.5 Environmental Scan

The EAO faces a number of challenges and potential challenges in the delivery of its mission and mandate, including:

- Decreases in financial and human resources;
- Interest group expectations for more substantial public involvement in the EA review process;
- Slow economic growth, which may add to existing pressures for regulatory streamlining;
- International attention on BC environmental issues, which is likely to continue to fluctuate, and which may increase for certain issues;
- Increased public debate on the EA process following the review of controversial projects (e.g., Cayoosh, Tulsequah);
- Continued uncertainty regarding Aboriginal land claims;
- Continued uncertainty for project reviews in areas of BC where land use planning is incomplete;
- Further demands to enhance multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional involvement in review processes; and
- Increased government expectations for EAO to conduct reviews of controversial land use and development projects (e.g. SkyTrain, Burns Bog).

More specifically, factors that continually influence and challenge the EAO's capacity to deliver comprehensive, balanced, neutral and timely EA reviews of major projects include:

- Balancing demands with EAO resources;
- Efficient co-ordination of EAO activities;
- Effectiveness in meeting legislated timelines;
- Internal recognition that EAO activities affect the workloads of BC government ministries and other review agencies;
- Further development of mechanisms for consulting with First Nations;
- Recruiting and retaining qualified staff, with provision for relevant training;
- Securing appropriate operating budgets and funding; and
- Openness to continuing organizational improvement and adaptability to ensure that reviews are conducted in a manner consistent with provincial policy.

Section 2

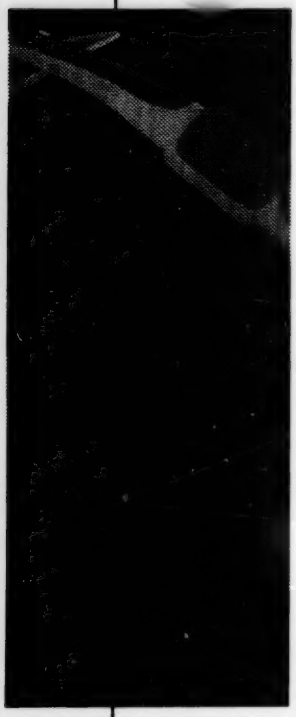
Goals & Business Areas

2.1 Key Business Areas

The EAO's key business areas are Environmental Assessment Reviews, Special Projects, and the Corporate Operations that support these other activities.

Environmental Assessment Reviews

The EAO is responsible for administering the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Most projects handled by the EAO are subject to this Act, with the final decision on project approval made by two ministers or Cabinet. The EAO provides decision-makers with information that is comprehensive, balanced, and timely.



In order to make project reviews more efficient and timely, the EAO has been encouraging and supporting more extensive pre-application discussions between the proponent and government agencies, First Nations, key stakeholders, and the public. These discussions provide the proponent with a clearer understanding of the EA review and permitting processes, key issues to be addressed in the application, and appropriate study and reporting requirements.

The co-ordination of post-certification activities (e.g., permitting) and compliance reviews of certificate conditions for approved projects are emerging areas of business for the EAO.

Special Projects

The EAO oversees "Special Projects" which are not reviewed under the legislated review process, but which warrant enhanced review or study. These projects are typically assigned by ministers or by Cabinet when neutral administration, objective and impartial advice or an enhanced public consultation process are needed.

Corporate Operations

The corporate business of the EAO includes all strategic and business planning activities, including budgeting, staff development, and systems. This area of business also includes the development and review of supporting legislation and policies, corporate communications, records management, the Project Registry and EAO website.

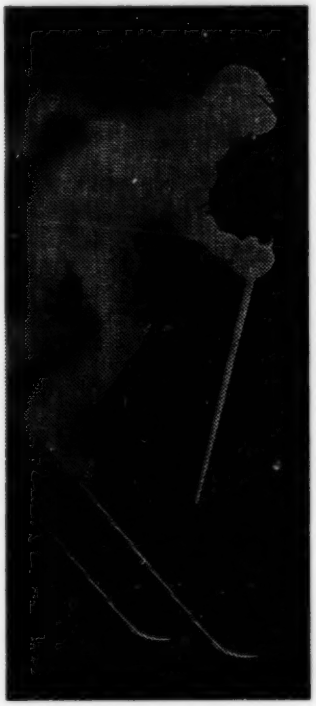
2.2 Goals

The goals of the EAO are:

1. To protect the environment and public health;
2. To foster a sound economy;
3. To respect social, cultural and heritage values; and
4. To achieve organizational excellence.

2.3 Objectives

Key challenges and priority areas for measuring the performance of the EAO are reflected in the following objectives:



A. Organizational capacity to deliver the EA process - retain highly motivated and dedicated staff in a competitive compensation environment.

B. Expert, fair and open review process - provide a well-managed forum for considering and, where possible, resolving conflicting values and interests relating to major projects.

C. Support informed decision making - provide ministers with credible and objective recommendations relating to the acceptability of projects, based on comprehensive and timely project reviews.

D. Monitoring review quality - design and execute post-certification project monitoring and compliance programs.

2.4 Strategies

General strategies or approaches for delivering outcomes that meet the stated objectives include:

- Working to build and maintain credibility, support and trust;
- Fostering co-operative relationships with First Nations and government agencies;
- Conducting effective, technically sound reviews in an efficient and timely manner; and
- Delivering service excellence to review participants, and ensuring a high degree of accountability.

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Section 3

Performance Measures & Targets

The EAO contributes to government's overall objectives for sustainability in BC. Environmental assessment (EA) is a value-added process that involves the assessment of potential impacts and the evaluation of proposed mitigation plans (see Appendix A - EAO Logic Model). Ultimately, a means is needed to determine whether the environment, local communities, and the province are served as a result of a project having been subject to the EA process. Performance measures are used for this purpose.

A performance measure is an indicator of the degree of success an agency has in achieving its goals and objectives.

The following performance measures and associated targets have been identified to determine progress towards priority objectives of the EAO.

Objective	Performance Measure	Target
Organizational capacity to deliver the EA process.	**Quantitative:** • Number of timeline extensions requested (excluding extensions initiated by proponent)	• Maintain process predictability at current levels (minimal timeline extensions).
	Qualitative: • Stakeholder perception.	• Positive response to stakeholder exit surveys.
Expert, fair and open review process.	**Quantitative:** • Number of FOI requests.	• Maintain current levels of minimal levels of FOI requests by ensuring ongoing access to information
	Qualitative: • Stakeholder perception.	• Positive response to stakeholder exit surveys.
Support informed decision making.	**Quantitative:** • % of certification decisions supported (i.e. recommendations accepted/endorsed) • Significance of certification decisions.	• Maintain current levels of acceptance of advice and recommendations by ministers. • Positive response to stakeholder exit surveys • Report socio-economic value of projects approved/rejected and associated employment figures (construction/ operation)
Monitoring review quality	**Quantitative:** • Instances of non-compliance identified per post-certification review.	• Establish degree of compliance in year 1 through selected compliance reviews (maintain or increase levels of compliance in subsequent years)

SECTION 4

CONSISTENCY WITH GOVERNMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

The EA process focuses on whether economic development projects can deliver economic benefits in a sustainable way that protect the environment as well as heritage, health, social and community values. The EA process provides for the assessment of the economic, health, social, environmental, cultural and heritage effects, both positive and negative, of all reviewable projects. The certainty and timeliness of the EA process supports job creation and increased economic activity that is socially and environmentally sustainable.

4.1 Safeguarding BC's Natural Heritage

Environmental (biophysical) impacts are a central consideration of all EA reviews. The EA ensures the evaluation of measures for mitigating potential impacts on air and water quality, wildlife and aquatic resources (including species abundance, distribution and habitat), natural resources (forest, agricultural, mineral and petroleum), recreation and tourism resources, soils, vegetation, terrain and natural hazards. Depending on the circumstances, project studies may need to incorporate baseline inventory studies and cumulative impact information focused on specific project design and mitigation issues.

4.2 A Modern Economy that Works for Everyone

Economic effects considered in the EA process include impacts on employment, income, infrastructure and economic and regional development as they affect local communities and First Nations. As of March 2001, the EAO has completed 37 project reviews since the Act was introduced in June 1995, and all of these projects were certified by ministers. Of this total, 26 projects are under construction, under development or have been completed and are in full operation. The province-wide distribution of projects contributes to local employment opportunities and regionally equitable job creation.

	Certified Projects	Projects under Review
Estimated total investment ($)	$3,480 million	$2,500 million
Estimated construction jobs	10,529	6,200
Estimated operating jobs	19,575	8,900

As of March, 2001, the EAO has 16 projects under review. Key economic data are summarized above:

Section 3

Performance Measures & Targets

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Section 4

Consistency with Government Strategic Plan

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4.3 Delivering Real Health Care Solutions and Expanding Educational Opportunities

Potential impacts on public health are among the issues considered in EA reviews. Potential health impacts may relate to public exposure to contaminants, occupational health, provision of health services and community health. Social impact assessments describe key indicators of existing community service delivery (health, education, human resource, emergency services), as well as potential project-induced demands on these services.

4.4 Safer Communities and a Higher Quality of Life

EA reviews consider social effects such as impacts on housing, accommodation, crime rates, land use, traffic and transportation, community infrastructure, emergency services (including policing and search and rescue), community stability and cohesion, and ensure that issues are adequately addressed. Also considered are public safety issues related to natural hazards (e.g, avalanches, landslides, flooding). Much of the focus of social, cultural and heritage assessments is placed on the significance of such effects for First Nations communities and interests.

Section 5

Resources

5.1 Organization

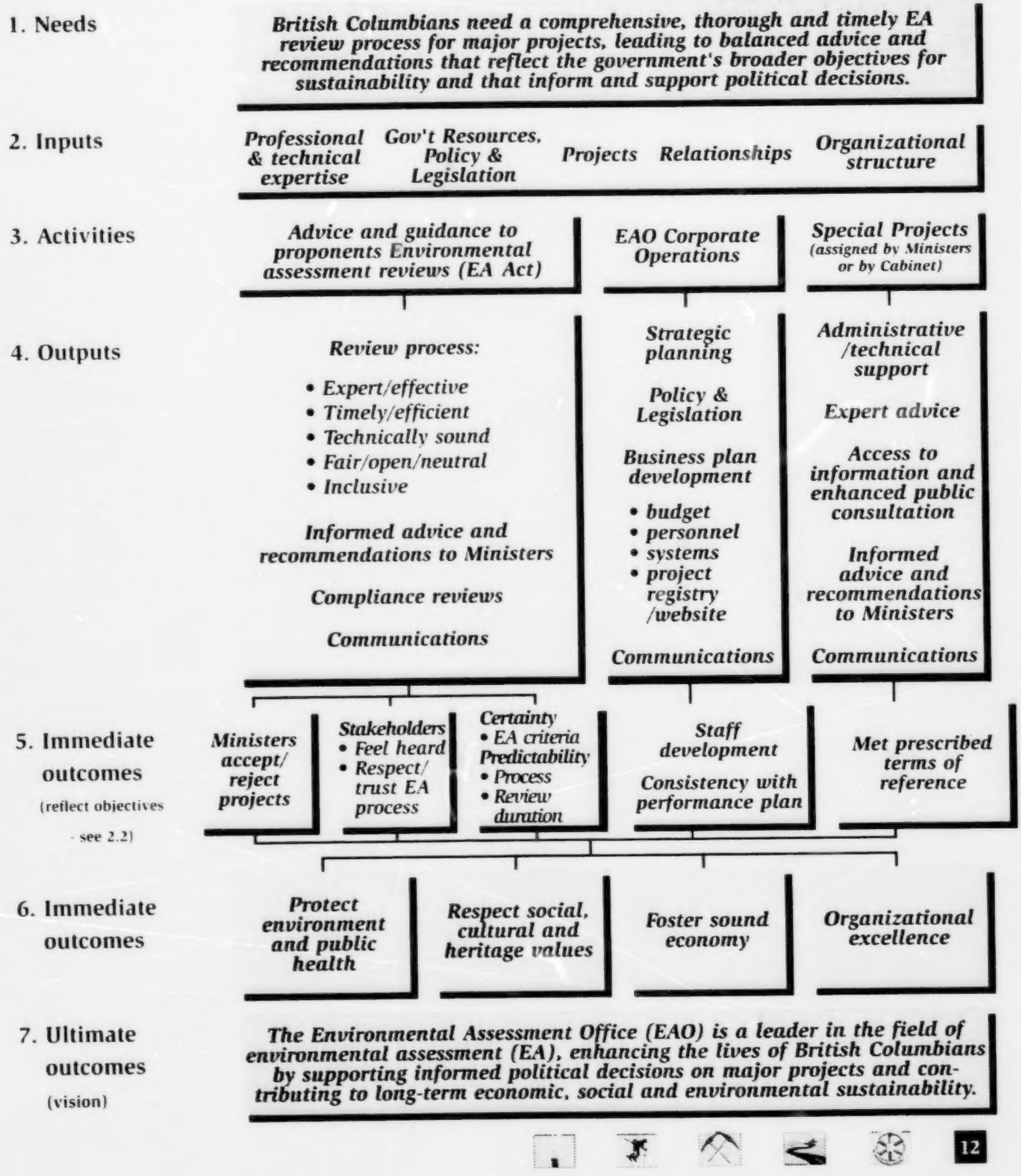
The EAO has an atypically "flat" organization, with 8 Project Assessment Directors reporting directly to a Deputy Minister. The directors are delegated a number of review process duties and responsibilities imposed by the *Environmental Assessment Act*. A number of Project Assessment Co-ordinators and Aboriginal Relations Co-ordinators support the directors in administering project reviews pursuant to the Act. Corporate services and Project Registry services defined in the *Environmental Assessment Act* are also vital parts of the EAO and its operation. See Appendix B for a simplified organizational diagram.

5.2 Resources

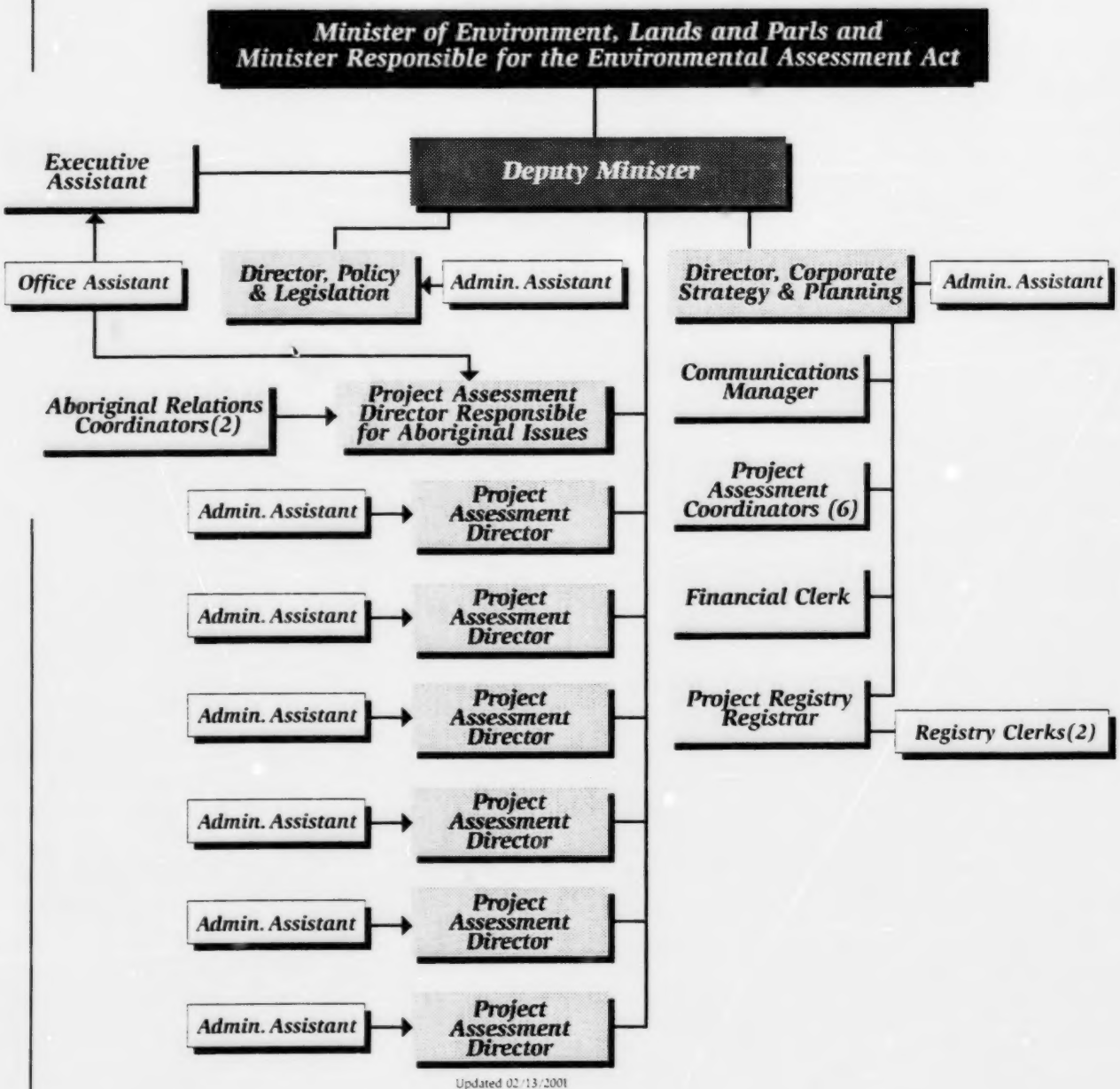
Staff & Budget

For 2001/02, EAO has a total of 38 full-time equivalents positions (FTEs), and a budget of $3,492,000.00.

Appendix A: EAO Logic Model


1. Needs
British Columbians need a comprehensive, thorough and timely EA review process for major projects, leading to balanced advice and recommendations that reflect the government's broader objectives for sustainability and that inform and support political decisions.
2. Inputs
Professional & technical expertise
Gov't Resources, Policy & Legislation
Projects
Relationships
Organizational structure
3. Activities
Advice and guidance to proponents Environmental assessment reviews (EA Act)
EAO Corporate Operations
Special Projects (assigned by Ministers or by Cabinet)
4. Outputs
Review process:
• Expert/effective
• Timely/efficient
• Technically sound
• Fair/open/neutral
• Inclusive
Informed advice and recommendations to Ministers
Compliance reviews
Communications
Strategic planning
Policy & Legislation
Business plan development
• budget
• personnel
• systems
• project registry /website
Communications
Administrative /technical support
Expert advice
Access to information and enhanced public consultation
Informed advice and recommendations to Ministers
Communications
5. Immediate outcomes
(reflect objectives - see 2.2)
Ministers accept/ reject projects
Stakeholders
• Feel heard
• Respect/ trust EA process
Certainty
• EA criteria
Predictability
• Process
• Review duration
Staff development
Consistency with performance plan
Met prescribed terms of reference
6. Immediate outcomes
Protect environment and public health
Respect social, cultural and heritage values
Foster sound economy
Organizational excellence
7. Ultimate outcomes
(vision)
The Environmental Assessment Office (EAO) is a leader in the field of environmental assessment (EA), enhancing the lives of British Columbians by supporting informed political decisions on major projects and contributing to long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Appendix B: EAO Organization Chart



Appendix C

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Business Area: A set of key activities /programs/budget areas related to the purpose, role, and mandate of an agency. Most agencies will have three to five key business/ program areas while larger ministries can have more.

Efficiency Measures: Measure the relationship between the amount of input (usually dollars or employee-years) and the amount of output or outcome of an activity or program.

Environmental Scan: The environmental scan provides an agency with critical information for thinking about, deciding upon, and preparing its future course of action. It provides an internal assessment of the agency's strengths and weaknesses, and examines factors within the agency that can positively or negatively affect its ability to accomplish its mission, goals and objectives. It also provides an assessment of external forces that can have a significant impact on the agency.

Goal: Goals are the ends that the agency (or a business/program area) wants to achieve in fulfilling its mandate and mission. They must be both realistic and achievable.

Input Measures: Measure amount of resources (dollars andFTEs) used to undertake a function.

Logic Model: A tool for describing the input-activity-output-outcome sequence for an organization. Useful for marketing and explaining the business areas of an organization.

Mission: The mission statement provides the reason for the agency's existence. It identifies what the agency does, why it does it and for whom. It also reminds everyone-the public and other government entities-of the unique purposes promoted and served by the agency. Agency goals, objectives and strategies must be consistent with its mission statement.

Objectives: Objectives are concise, realistic, result-oriented statements of the results that an agency, or program achieves along the way toward accomplishing its goals. They must be stated in a way that clearly communicates what is to be achieved and measured or assessed.

Outcome Measures: Measure the qualitative results/consequences or changes in conditions, behaviours or attitudes that indicate progress toward achievement of a program's mission and goals. Outcomes may be immediate, ultimate or somewhere in-between.

Output Measures: Quantitative measures of the level of service provided by a program, i.e., what came out of a

program or service and how much. The measurable units can be numbers, percentages or ratios.

Performance Measures: Performance measures can be used to indicate the degree of success an agency has in achieving its goals and objectives. When a measure has a specific numerical measurement attached to one aspect of the performance under consideration, it can also be referred to as a performance indicator.

Performance Plan: A plan which indicates what an agency's purpose or mission is, what its direction or vision is, what its goals and objectives are, the operational strategies it will use to achieve those objectives and how the public will know if it has been successful (performance measures and targets).

Performance Targets: Targets express pre-set quantifiable performance levels to be attained at a future date.

Program: A set of activities that has clearly defined dedicated resources and measurable objectives that are coherent and consistent.

Strategic Context: The strategic context of a performance plan provides high-level information that describes "Where are we now" and includes vision, mission, values and environmental scan.

Strategic Plan: A high-level corporate document that outlines vision, mission, values and key priorities for the medium to long term, with strategies for achieving goals and objectives.

Strategies: Strategies are the actions that describe how the objectives are to be achieved. Other terms used to describe strategies are programs, projects, initiatives, activities, etc.

Values: The value statements express the agency's core values or fundamental beliefs. They define the agency's management style, organizational values, and rules of personal and organizational behaviour.

Vision: A clear picture of the agency's preferred future-where the agency is going-where it wants to be. This preferred future must be sufficiently desirable and challenging so that it motivates and inspires agency employees and influences decision-making.